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THE BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT

An Industrial History and Guide

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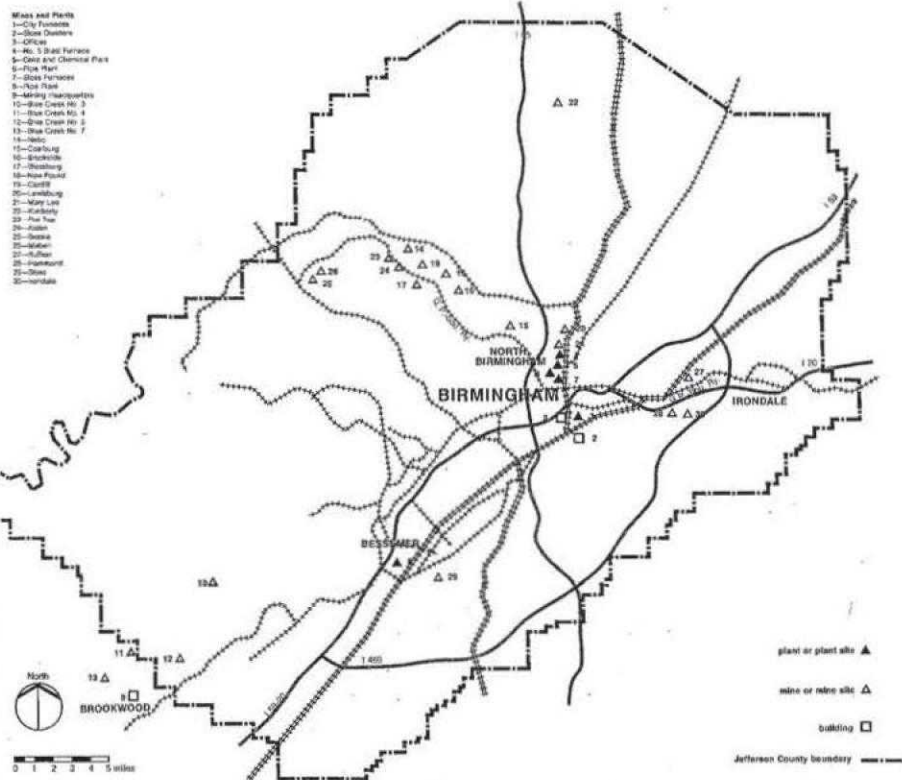
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Sloss-U.S. Pipe-Jim Walter

The Sloss Furnace Company was organized in the spring of 1881. With capital advanced by the L. & N. Railroad, contracts for ore and coal and 50 acres of land sandwiched between the tracks of the Alabama Great Southern and the L. & N. Railroads just east of the Birmingham central business district, James W. Sloss began construction of the Sloss City Furnaces. Harry Hargreaves, a Swiss engineer and associate of English inventor Thomas Whitwell, supervised furnace construction. The first furnace was blown in April 12, 1882. A second followed a year later. Scores of beehive coke ovens and tenement houses were erected adjacent to the two furnaces was 360 to 400 tons of "Sloss" brand pig iron. Sloss, or Colonel Sloss as he was frequently called, aggressively managed his company and used his extensive business contacts throughout the state to seek markets and purchase an additional 38,000 acres of mineral lands, including the rich ore lands on Red Mountain at Sloss. These lands quickly became one of the district's largest ore mines. Sloss' two sons served as officers of the company, Fred Sloss as

secretary-treasurer and Maclin Sloss as general manager.



James Wilfred Sloss, entrepreneur and railroad man who founded the Sloss Furnace Company. (The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama, Ethel Ames).

Born to Irish parents on a farm near Mooresville in 1820, James W. Sloss had built a large mercantile and real estate business throughout northern Alabama before becoming active in railroad development during the 1850s. In 1871, the L. & N. accepted his proposition to complete the final 67-mile gap of the South and North Railroad over the difficult, hilly terrain between Birmingham and Decatur. Rail transport into the Birmingham District opened September 24, 1872. (At the time, this construction nearly bankrupted the L. & N., but later it provided them lucrative mineral transport). In 1876, Sloss, whose business interests had gravitated to the Birmingham District, participated in the coke iron experiment at Oxmoor, and in 1879, he joined forces with Henry DeBardeleben and Truman Aldrich in the Pratt Coal and Iron Company's exploration and development of the Warrior coal fields.

In 1886, at age 66, Sloss sold his furnace company to a group of Virginia and New York capitalists headed by John W. Johnston, president of the Georgia Pacific Railroad, and Joseph F. Johnston, president of the Alabama National Bank and later Alabama Governor and U. S. Senator. By 1887, with \$3 million in northern capital raised by Wall Street financier John Campbell Maben, the

ly reorganized Sloss Iron and Steel Company acquired the Coalburg Coal and Iron Company, which had mines along Georgia Pacific tracks at Coalburg, Brookside and Blossburg, and built two blast furnaces in North Birmingham, also using the Georgia Pacific tracks. John W. Sloss and his brother Andrew B. Sloss formed the North Birmingham Iron and Steel Company, the North Highlands Land and Iron Company and the North Birmingham Land and Iron Company and began development of industrial suburbs near Birmingham. Despite the new name, Sloss Iron and Steel Company's four blast furnaces produced only foundry and mill iron, 175,000 tons annually by 1892. In the dearth of local pig iron product manufacturers, the company aggressively used markets throughout the United States and abroad. In 1894, Sloss began export trade with Europe, Australia, Japan and South America.

In 1899, the company acquired several iron operations in the Sloss-Sheffield District — the Hattie and Lady Ensley furnaces, constructed by Enoch Ensley in 1891 and named for his daughters, and the Philadelphia furnaces — in addition to substantial coal and ore lands, notably the Iron ore mines at Russellville.

Reorganized as the Sloss-Sheffield Steel Iron Company and incorporated in New Jersey with capital stock of \$20 million, the company was the district's

second largest producer of pig iron. (The Birmingham District was then producing 1.2 million tons of iron, or 42 percent of the total U. S. production). Company assets included seven blast furnaces (1,400 tons per day total capacity); 1,500 beehive coke ovens; 94,500 acres of mineral lands; five coal mines in Jefferson County at Coalburg, Brookside, Blossburg, Brazil and Cardiff; red ore mines at Sloss and Irondale (later called Ruffner); quarries at North Birmingham, brown ore mines at Russellville; 1,200 worker tenements, and 31 stores, warehouses and office buildings.

At the time of reorganization, the *Age Herald* of November 5, 1899, noted the company was "progressive, alert and ready to meet all competition in the new world and the old world." In 1902, John Campbell Maben, Virginia-born director of the Georgia Pacific and the Wall Street investment banker who had financed the company since its inception, became president. He instituted major improvements at the City Furnaces and area mines. By 1905, underground slopes were opened at the Sloss and Irondale mines on Red Mountain and new coal mines in the Warrior fields opened at Flat Top, Nebo and Bessie. A post office was established at Maben and named for him. The Flat Top coal mine, run almost exclusively by convict labor, became Sloss' largest producer. In 1904, Sloss produced 382,267 tons of pig iron,

1,400,669 tons of coal, 544,797 tons of coke, 500,274 tons of red ore and 83,961 tons of dolomite.

Sloss production boomed during World War I. From 1918 to 1920, the company built a modern coke by-products plant at its North Birmingham site, where 600 Semet-Solvay ovens replaced 1,380 beehives at the City Furnace site. They produced a more uniform coke and such valuable by-products as gas for the City of Birmingham's domestic consumption and electrification for the Sloss mines, including electrical coal and iron transport, which allowed the company's 1,440 mules to retire. In 1915, the City of Birmingham, citing excessive pollution and annoyance, had compelled the company to close its beehive ovens.

Throughout the 1920s, Sloss remained a major producer of merchant pig iron. In 1923 and 1924, the company expanded with the purchase of the Sheffield Iron Corporation and the Alabama Corporation. By 1924, total Sloss assets included 11 furnaces and 93,000 acres of mineral lands owned in fee simple plus 68,000 acres of mineral and surface rights, a total of 161,000 acres. (Jefferson County mines purchased at this time included those at Lewisburg, Kimberly and Brookwood. Sloss also acquired the Mary Lee Railroad.) With the help of the new purchases, production of coal, coke and pig iron doubled in 1923 and 1924. In 1925, Sloss opened the Humoro mine and

named it for company board chairman and president Hugh Morrow. Today Humoro remains a station stop on the company railroad.

Unfortunately, the newly acquired furnaces, built in the Sheffield District during the late 1880s pig iron boom, were obsolete technologically. In 1927, Sloss-Sheffield closed all but the North Birmingham and City furnaces. Here a program of substantial improvements was instituted. During 1927 and 1928, the two City Furnaces were rebuilt, enlarged and refitted with mechanical charging apparatus. Single furnace production increased to 400 tons per day. In 1931, the company installed a pig casting machine. Until this time all Sloss iron had been cast in sand molds, by hand.

Pipeworks and foundries in the Birmingham District were major purchasers of Sloss pig iron. In December 1942, U. S. Pipe, a large consumer of pig iron and Sloss' largest customer, acquired from Allied Chemical & Dye Corporation of New York majority control of Sloss. Founded in 1899 in New Jersey as a national combine of pipeworks and foundries, U. S. Pipe had operated two plants in Bessemer and North Birmingham since 1899 and 1911, respectively. In October 1952, U. S. Pipe purchased the entire assets of the Sloss-Sheffield company. From 1952 to 1958, capacity of the North Birmingham coke works doubled. In 1958, construction of the No. 5

blast furnace (with a daily capacity of 1,300 tons) adjacent to the U. S. Pipe North Birmingham plant expanded Sloss' iron production. The older North Birmingham furnaces were subsequently dismantled and the land redeveloped. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, U. S. Pipe purchased about 70 percent of Sloss' iron production and 13 percent of its coke. At this time, Sloss was still mining all its raw materials. By the late 1950s, imported ores supplemented Red Mountain and Russellville production, which was finally discontinued in 1975.

In 1969, Jim Walter Corporation acquired control of U. S. Pipe. Established as a builder of low-cost, partially finished homes in the late 1940s, within 20 years the Jim Walter company had become one of the nation's largest home builders and the leading producer of building materials.

In the ensuing years, serving the water and waste transmission markets and benefitting from the steady flow of federal funds for projects to implement the Clean Water Act, U. S. Pipe has remained the nation's largest producer of pressure pipe for water supply. Plants at Bessemer and North Birmingham continue to operate in the Birmingham District.

In 1974, Jim Walter began deep shaft mining of high-grade coal from reserves acquired through purchase of U. S. Pipe. In 1976, the Mining Division organized a program under which four new mines with

a 7 to 8 million ton production capacity will be opened by the mid-1980s. In 1979, the Mining Division was producing 2 million tons per year and employing 1,449 people in six underground mines (including the older U. S. Pipe-Sloss mines at Nebo and Flat Top) and new operations in the Warrior and Blue Creek fields. During 1980, the old Bessie mine was reopened. The Coke, Iron and Chemicals Division, successor to the Sloss-Sheffield North Birmingham coke plant established in 1918, produces coke, coke by-products and pig iron and employs 715 people at four plants.

Since corporate reorganization in 1975, the North Birmingham No. 5 furnace, part of the Coke, Iron and Chemicals Division, has competed with low-cost foreign pig iron and domestic scrap iron for its share of the U. S. pipe market. The L. & N. provides cheap rail transportation for its output to foundry markets in the Midwest. The No. 5 furnace is the Birmingham District's last remaining merchant iron blast furnace still in operation.

Jim Walter blew out the Sloss City Furnaces in 1972, citing technological obsolescence and high cost of installing pollution control devices as compelling arguments for the closing. The company donated the furnace site to the Birmingham Fair Authority, which transferred it to the City of Birmingham. In the summer of 1976, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), a division of the National Park Service engaged in the

umentation of America's industrial
lage, sent a survey team to study and
rd the furnaces, the earliest blast
aces of their type still standing in the
ed States.
1978, Birmingham voters approved a
million bond issue to seek ways to
vert these furnaces into an industrial
eum. The Sloss City Furnaces are
d in the National Register of Historic
es and have been designated a
onal Historic Landmark. (Landmark
s means that a panel of national
arts considers the site to be "of
ptional value to the nation and an
laceable part of our national
lage.")
or additional discussion of the Sloss,
Pipe, and Jim Walter companies, see
sections on North Birmingham,
burg, Cardiff, Brookside, Blossburg,
Top-Alden, Lewisburg, Kimberly,
is and Ruffner).

'S ASSOCIATED WITH SLOSS-U. S. PIPE-JIM
.TER

s City Furnaces, est. 1882 (rebuilt 1927-28)
blast furnaces with skip hoists, sheds, engine
e, bathhouse, commissary
venue North between 26th and 32nd Streets
downtown Birmingham

s Quarters Site (c. 1900)
tion of 1st Avenue and 32nd Street South
side

Jim Walter Resources General Offices
U. S. Pipe and Foundry Company Headquarters
(1953)
3300 1st Avenue North
Downtown Birmingham

Jim Walter No. 5 Blast Furnace Plant (1958)
Only functioning merchant pig iron furnace in the
district.
Also chemical and mineral wool plants
4200 Hurtsville Road
North Birmingham

Jim Walter Resources Coke and Chemicals
Division
Originally Sloss-Sheffield Coke Plant, est. 1918-20
3500 25th Street North
North Birmingham

Site of Sloss-Sheffield Steel and Iron Company
Furnaces, in operation 1887-1950s
To east of 27th Street at 24th Avenue
North Birmingham

Sloss Quarters
North 27th Street, between 25th and 26th Avenues
North Birmingham

Jim Walter Resources Mining Division
Headquarters
Brookwood

U. S. Pipe North Birmingham Pipe Works, est. 1899
3000 30th Avenue
North Birmingham

U. S. Pipe Bessemer Pipe Works, est. 1890
2023 St. Louis Avenue
Bessemer

Former Coal Mines: Coalburg, Brookside,
Blossburg, New Found, Cardiff, Lewisburg,
Searles, Mary Lee, Kimberly, Bessie, Flat Top

Current Coal Mines: Blue Creek No. 3, No. 4, No. 5
and No. 6, Nabo

Former Ore Mines: Ruffner, Hammond, Sloss,
Irondale

NORTH BIRMINGHAM

North Birmingham was originally part of
the Alfred Nathaniel Hawkins plantation.
Hawkins, grandson of pioneer settler
Williamson Hawkins on whose plantation
the Thomas ironworks were developed in
the 1880s, served as treasurer (1860-64)
and later deputy sheriff and tax collector of
Jefferson County. His 2,000-acre farm was
noted for its pleasantly sloping hills and
many springs and creeks.

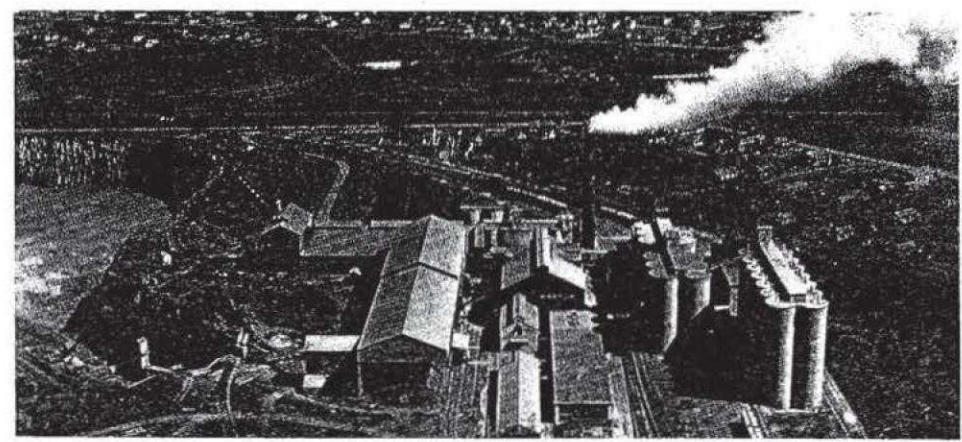
The bountiful water supply prompted
Indian settlement during the mound
building period and also the area's first
industrial development. In 1872, the Elyton
Land Company, which founded the City of
Birmingham in 1870, formed a subsidiary
company to build a waterworks. Civil
engineer Willis J. Milner, then an officer of
the land company and superintendent of
the waterworks, chose Village Creek as
Birmingham's water supply and built a
pumping station along 21st Avenue
between 30th and 31st Streets North. By
May 1873, the station pumped water to a
reservoir on the hill at 13th Avenue and
22nd Street North; it then flowed by gravity
through a pipeline along 32nd Street to the
downtown area. By 1887, with the spread
of population over the watershed and
fouling of waters by industrial plants, the
Village Creek supply had become
inadequate. The Elyton Land Company
then built a canal from springs forming the
headwaters of Five Mile Creek north of the
present city of Tarrant to the North

Birmingham pumping station. Not until
1890, however, with the development of a
new pumping station on the Cahaba River,
nine miles south of Birmingham, did the
company establish a permanent solution
to the city's domestic water needs. The
North Birmingham pumping station
remained in service until 1938. It was
subsequently demolished. Portions of the

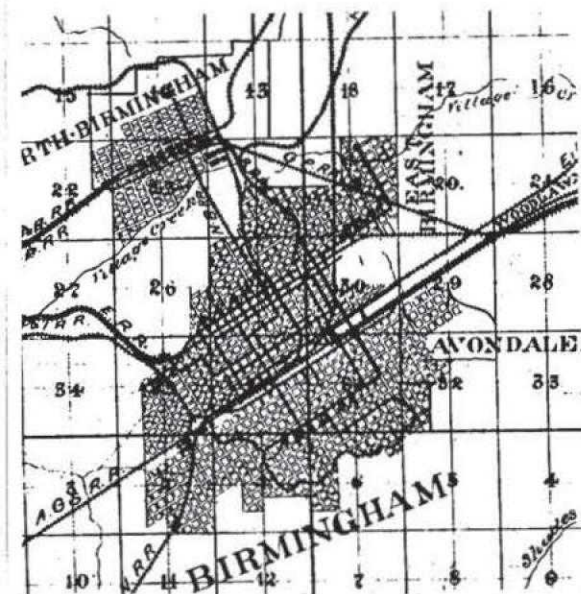
canal are still visible in Tarrant near
Jefferson Boulevard.

On October 1, 1886, brothers John W.
and Andrew Johnston, president and
treasurer of the Georgia Pacific Railroad,
organized the North Birmingham Land
Company and purchased 900 acres of
land for development as a manufacturing
and residential town. Directors included

John T. Milner and E. M. Tutwiler,
engineers for the two major railroads
which would provide rail transportation to
the new town. At this time, in association
with lawyer-banker Joseph Forney
Johnston (no relation to John and Andrew
Johnston) and other Virginia
businessmen, they purchased the Sloss
Furnace Company. In 1887, under Joseph



Lone Star Cement Company plant with quarry (left) and view of North Birmingham community (top). 1954. (Birmingham News)



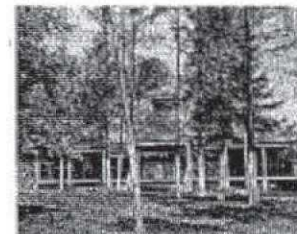
Johnston's direction, Sloss built two blast furnaces in North Birmingham and acquired substantial coal lands just to the northwest, all located along the Georgia Pacific tracks.

Consistent with late 19th-century development practices, the North Birmingham Land Company laid out the town in a rectangular grid. Railroad and manufacturing sites were located on level plains, residences for whites on the wooded heights. Avenues, a generous 80 to 100 feet wide, ran from north to south beginning with First (now 35th) at the North Birmingham Park (now the golf course). They extended to 12th Avenue just north of Village Creek. Streets were numbered from First to Ninth, and ran from east to west, parallel to the tracks of the railroad which formed the town's eastern border. The tracks of the Georgia Pacific (later the Southern), St. Louis and Santa Fe (later Frisco) and Birmingham Mineral Railroad crossed the grid pattern at 8th (now 27th to 29th) Avenue, separating the white section to the north of the tracks from the black section to the south. Yards for the Georgia Pacific were located along the present Weatherly Road (named for James Weatherly, a lawyer for the Georgia Pacific). The Frisco and Illinois Central later operated shops and yards near the community. The first commercial district — in a wood frame business district surrounded by woods — was along "old Seventh," now 29th Avenue. This avenue led to the entrance of the Sloss furnaces.

In December of 1886, the North Birmingham Street Railway Company incorporated as a land company affiliate to stimulate property sales in the new industrial town. By 1897, a streetcar line approached the community along 26th Street, crossed several bridges over Village Creek and then turned west to 27th Street, ending at North Birmingham Park, site of large springs. Later commercial activity located in brick and masonry structures along 27th Street, the route of the streetcar line which became the business heart of North Birmingham.

The *Weekly Iron Age* of August 11, 1887, described North Birmingham with its "tasty cottages and park unsurpassed in arrangement and taste by anything in Birmingham," as the city's "prettiest" suburb. The *Iron Age* reporter also noted that one of the North Birmingham Indian mounds was supplying dirt for a railroad fill and commented: "How this age of utility remorselessly destroys the relics of the past."

Near the big springs in the park, the Birmingham Country Club incorporated on October 1, 1898, as a driving and recreation club. At this time principal activities of the club's 77 members included ping pong, lotto, duplicate whist and tennis. At this same time, the Birmingham Golf Club was also established in North Birmingham. In 1904, the two merged and built the Highland Park Club at Lakeview Park on Birmingham's Southside. In 1927, need for



Birmingham Country Club's first clubhouse, built in the 1890s in North Birmingham Park. (Birmingham Public Library Archives)



North Birmingham Park in 1902, described as "charming, verdant, siluring" and a "show spot" of the "Magic City". (Birmingham Public Library Archives)

expanded facilities prompted a move to the club's present location in Shades Valley.

One of the first industries to locate in North Birmingham was the Henderson Steel and Manufacturing Company (later Henderson Steel). On February 27, 1898, Birmingham's first steel was molded into ingots at the Henderson plant. Henderson was a New York furnace man who moved his patented open-hearth furnaces to the industrial site near Village Creek. Chemist and engineer William H. Hassinger, then general manager of the Alabama Rolling Mills, superintended the complicated process by which the open-hearth furnaces converted local minerals into steel. Declared of superior quality by American and English experts and greatly acclaimed by the southern press, the first district-made steel created much excitement. However, its production was expensive. In July of 1890, a committee of the Birmingham Commercial Club (composed of A. B. Johnston, then president, W. H. Hassinger and TCI and L. & N. representatives) assumed operation of the Henderson works. Failure to secure necessary capital to improve and enlarge the plant eventually led to its demise.

Other North Birmingham companies were more successful. With a population approaching 5,000, North Birmingham incorporated in the early part of 1902. Soon thereafter the municipality completed construction of a city hall and

station. G. B. Mitchell, T. T. Jones, es L. Cole, T. H. Freil and J. H. Berry, erved as mayors of the city. According e *Birmingham News* of May 31, 1904, city boasted a fine system of public iols and churches and "healthful r... beautiful scenery... and pure Hundreds of workers built or rented

modest homes in the community, which the *News* declared "much in request as a residential section."

Distinctly a manufacturing and industrial locality, North Birmingham contained 10 plants. Largest were the Sloss-Sheffield pig iron furnaces employing 600 men and the Dimmick pipe

plant, which employed 508 persons. In 1889 experienced pipeworks manager, Pennsylvanian J. K. Dimmick, had built a substantial plant at the junction of the L. & N. and Southern railroads. English ironmaster Hamilton Beggs built his second pipe and foundry works at 24th Street and the corner of 27th Avenue. In 1901, local investors and New Jersey interests incorporated Alabama's first cement company, the Southern Cement Company, and began processing blast furnace slag acquired from Sloss' North Birmingham furnaces at a site adjacent to the furnaces. This plant became a leading local producer of mortar cement for use in buildings, and later hydro-electric dam and road construction.¹ Packing and sewer pipe companies, a knitting mill and a sand, lime and brickworks rounded out the area's diversified industry in 1904.

The North Birmingham Land Company actively promoted the industrial city under the successive chairmanships of Col. James J. Garrett, industrialist and coal operators Frank Nelson and Herbert Tutwiler. In the early 1900s, land company directors included wealthy and influential businessmen in Richmond, Virginia, New York bankers and directors of the Sloss-Sheffield and Southern Railway companies.²

¹Today the Martin-Marietta Corporation of Chicago uses the plant as a shipping terminal.
²Southern Railway acquired the Georgia Pacific in 1893.

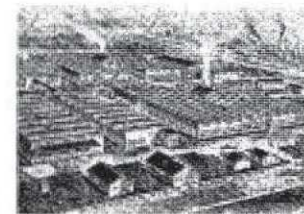
Many foundry businesses located in the city to be close to a cheap and plentiful supply of pig iron. As an expansion of the Atlanta Stove Works Company, founded in 1889 in Georgia, brothers Sam D. and Boiling H. Jones together with B. H. Hartsfield established the Alabama Manufacturing Company along the Southern Railway in 1902. Initially relying on convict labor, the foundry (known as the Birmingham Stove and Range Company since 1914) manufactured wood and coal heaters, ranges and stoves and a complete line of cast iron skillets and hollowware. A company slogan advertised

"From mother earth to finished product, all in a mile or two."³ By 1910, four other foundry and stoveworks had established operations in North Birmingham.

In 1905, the American Cast Iron Pipe and Foundry Company, a wholly southern-financed operation previously based in Georgia, located a new plant in the western portion of the city where the separate community of Acipco eventually developed. This company later absorbed the Beggs Foundry operation. In 1911, U.S. Pipe, a recent combine of southern pipeworks, acquired the Dimmick Pipe Plant.⁴ By 1920, North Birmingham

boasted seven pipeworks.

In 1911, Haskins Williams moved the Birmingham Rail & Locomotive Company to North Birmingham. Founded in 1897, the company engaged in rebuilding and selling steam locomotives. In 1915, H. J. Williams, Haskins' brother, entered the company.⁵

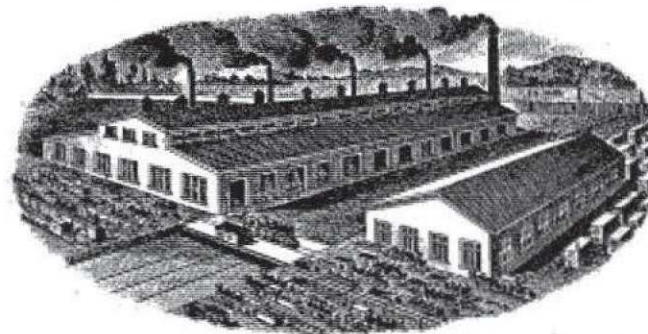


Birmingham Stove & Range Company plant. (Courtesy, Hugh Rushing)

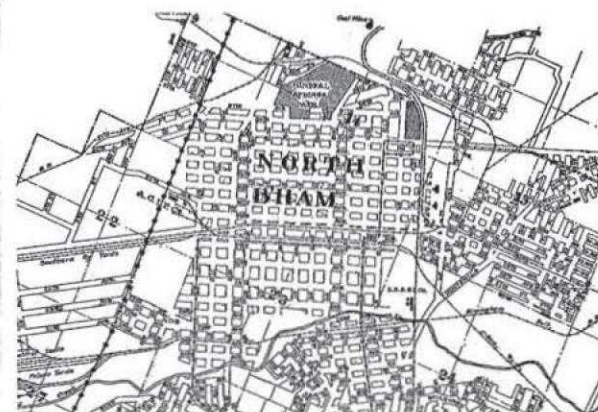
³Still a Jones family operation, the foundry and stoveworks manufactures many of these cast iron wares today.

⁴Acquired by Jim Walter Corporation, the U. S. Pipe plant at this site remains active to this day.

⁵Today rebuilding of diesel-locomotives and selling of rail and allied products remain the principal activity of the Birmingham Rail & Locomotive Company, still a family owned and operated company.



Birmingham Rail & Locomotive Company plant. (Courtesy, Carlisle Jones)



Birmingham in 1914, showing community (center), ACIPCO plant, Southern, Illinois Central and Frisco yards, U.S. Pipe plant and Collegeville grid (right). (Giesenkamp's Map of Birmingham, Agnes Map Collection)

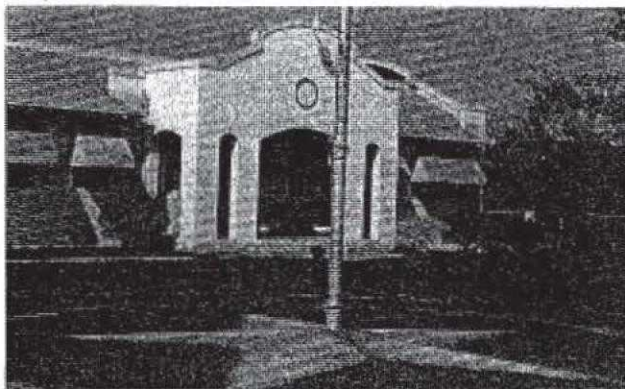


Walter's No. 5 blast furnace (1958), the last
 ning merchant iron furnace in the Birmingham
 ct. (Courtesy, Jim Walter Corporation)

In 1918, the Sloss company expanded its North Birmingham operations with construction of a coke by-products plant. In the 1920s acquisition of coal mines at Lewisburg and Kimberly just to the north increased company production of pig iron, coke and by-products at these works. Additionally the company operated a quarry at 24th Avenue (now a lake and rubbish collection landfill). Sloss constructed and maintained extensive company housing known as "Sloss

Quarters" near the furnace site and probably maintained some housing near the coke works.

Railway facilities, bargains in real estate, tax exemptions by the city and plentiful labor all worked together to bring industry to North Birmingham. Despite emergency sessions of the aldermen and much protest, the industrial city became a part of the City of Birmingham in 1910. Nonetheless, throughout the 1910s and 1920s, North Birmingham considered



Lone Star (now Chadell) Cement Company Headquarters (1922). (Marjorie L. White)

itself a separate community. it continued to expand with construction of plants for Birmingham Tank Company (later a subsidiary of Ingal's Iron of Birmingham) and shops and yards for the railroads until it became, as its local Chamber of Commerce advertised, "the home of 72 diversified industries."

At this time in addition to housing provided by industrial corporations several private real estate firms were active in development of housing. including the J. H. Berry & Company and the Birmingham Realty Company. Beginning in 1912, Birmingham Realty began major improvements to its Norwood



Stately residence of Jno. R. Copeland in Norwood, c. 1910 Birmingham Deluxe. (Courtesy, A. M. Shook, III)

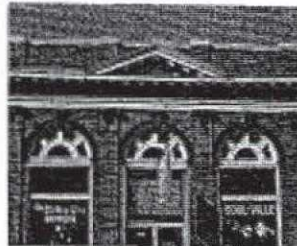
property just south of the original North Birmingham city limits. Streetcar service extended to the area by the 1890s. Here they constructed a spacious boulevard and fine, substantial homes. They named the boulevard and the elite subdivision for Stanley Norwood, real estate man and friend of Leslie Fullenwider, president of Birmingham Realty at this time. By 1913, about 100 homes had been built. The company maintained the boulevard as a beautiful parkway and hoped it would attract the "cream" of the steel town's society.

A 1908 map shows a grid of streets to the east of the Dimmick pipe plant and the Southern Railway tracks that indicates the beginnings of a community at the site of Collegeville. Streets were named Cameron, William, Carter, Earle, Slaton, Holmes and Sloss. As early as 1912, the Birmingham city directory lists a North Birmingham School at 4303 27th Avenue North, Collegeville. This elementary school, affectionately known as "Lauderdale College" and "The College," gave the community its name.

In 1924, Stephenson Bernard Realty Company built several substantial four-room bungalows along 32nd Street. This company and others gradually extended streets, building additional private housing which they sold to blacks who worked at area pipe shops, foundries and cementworks and in the Lewisburg mines. Along the Southern Railway tracks the Sloss Company maintained the many

rusty-red row houses of "Sloss Quarters." (Most of these were demolished in 1964 with construction of the Collegeville housing project.)

Along the 27th Street route of the streetcar, a trading center for the community and outlying areas of northeast Jefferson County gradually emerged in the late 1910s and 1920s. This district expanded northward from 27th Avenue where the old U. S. Cast Iron Pipe and Foundry commissary was located in the early 1910s. At this time businesses included Consolidated Mercantile Company (a Wylam-based operation), Italian grocers, the Ferguson Millinery and Dry Goods Company, North Birmingham Trust and Savings Bank, the J. H. Berry &



J. H. Berry & Company Building (1910). (Marjorie L. White)

y, several corner drugstores and a store. In 1921 and 1922, Hill Piggly Wiggly and the A&P chain stores along 27th Street. In 1923, the North Birmingham Theater. Construction of the First National Bank of Birmingham, the North Birmingham Library and the first professional building, the Mason-Martin Building, from 1923 to 1926, was further evidence of the district's prosperity. In

1929, S. H. Kress & Co. Notions built the tallest and fanciest store in North Birmingham. Actively promoted by community pride and the North Birmingham Merchants Association, the 27th Street commercial district thrived. In 1934 the U. S. Department of Commerce estimated 8,119 families (a total population of 38,105 persons) lived in the 10.7 square miles which constituted North Birmingham.

After World War II construction of the 26th Street overpass and widening of old U. S. Highway 31 led to creation of a new commercial district along 26th Street. Distinguished by neon lights, plastic hamburger joints and chicken stands, it vied with the 27th district one block over. Other community improvements, including several overpasses and

Interstate 65, alleviated many traffic congestion problems in the community, but also contributed to a decline in the relative attractiveness and vitality of the older commercial and residential sections. Today 20 percent of North Birmingham land is devoted to plants of large industrial establishments which give employment to many people who reside in the community. More than 100 major industries located in the area, including the world's two largest cast iron pipe manufacturers, provide economic underpinning for future community development. Perhaps more than any other of Birmingham's industrial suburbs, North Birmingham comes closest to fulfilling the ideals of its founders, who in October of 1886 formed a land company to build an industrial and residential town.

NORTH BIRMINGHAM SITES

Industries

U.S. Pipe Plant, est. 1899
3000 30th Avenue North

Birmingham Stove and Range Company, est. 1902
Huntsville Road at 27th Avenue

American Cast Iron Pipe Company, est. 1905
1501 31st Avenue North

Jim Walter Resources Coke, Iron and Chemicals Division, originally Sloss-Sheffield, est. 1918
No. 5 blast furnace (1958), mineral wool and chemical plants, Mary Lee Railroad
4200 Huntsville Road
3500 35th Street North

Citadel Cement Corporation Shipping Terminal
Formerly Lone Star and Phoenix Portland Plant and Quarry Headquarters Building (c. 1922)
2000 Huntsville Road

Martin-Marietta Shipping Terminal
Originally Southern Cement Company Plant, est. 1901
2800 24th Street North

Birmingham Tank Company
2716 26th Street North

Birmingham Rail and Locomotive Company Plant, est. 1911
3615 28th Way North

Birmingham Clay Products, est. 1926
23rd Lane North

Altec Industries, Inc., est. 1928
1730 Vanderbilt Road

Excellent View of North Birmingham Plants
47th Avenue along ridge from Lewisburg to Boyles Yards

Site of North Birmingham Pumping Station (1873-1939)
21st Avenue between 30th and 31st Streets North

Site of Sloss North Birmingham Furnaces, in operation 1897-1950s
To east of 27th Street at 24th Avenue

Site of Sloss Quarry
Now lake and landfill
East of I 65 between 19th and 25th Streets

Site of Henderson Furnace
(Here Birmingham's first steel was produced February 27, 1886)
28th Street at 24th Avenue North
Just north of Village Creek

COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL SITES

Original Commercial District (1910s-20s)
Along route of streetcar line which extended to the park
27th Street from 28th to 33rd Avenues North

North Birmingham City Hall (functioned as such 1902-1910)
Now Dove Overhead Door
2600 28th Avenue North

Consolidated Mercantile Building (before 1910)
Now Jordan Funeral Home
SE Corner 27th Street and 28th Avenue

The First National Bank of Birmingham, North Birmingham Branch (1926)
Originally North Birmingham Trust & Savings Bank
2030 27th Street North

J. H. Berry Realty Building (1910)
2910 27th Street North

Mason-Martin Building (1926)
Now Green's Department Store
2911 27th Street North

Braswell Furniture (1924)
Originally Security Trust and Savings Bank
Later Hill Grocery
3107 31st Street North

S. H. Kress & Company Notions Building (1929)
3012 27th Street North

New Commercial District (1950s-60s)
26th Street between 28th and 33rd Avenues North

North Birmingham Square (1961)
Architect: Kidd, Wheeler & Plosser
Linking 26th and 27th Streets between 30th and 31st Avenues North

North Birmingham Park, est. 1886
Also called Mineral Springs Park
36th Avenue between 20th and 25th Streets North

Residential District (1910s)
31st to 36th Avenues between 20th and 28th Streets North

Mt. Vernon Methodist Church, est. 1878
Now Lifeline Missionary Baptist
34th Avenue at 24th Street North

35th Avenue Baptist Church (1927)
Now Mt. Pilgrim District Association Center
2500 35th Avenue North

North Birmingham Baptist (1955)
Now Olivet Monumental Baptist Church
28th Street at 33rd Avenue North

North Birmingham Presbyterian, est. 1906
3410 25th Street North

St. Augustine Catholic Church
2634 34th Avenue North

Norwood Residential District, est. 1890s, principal development 1910s and 1920s
From 12th to 15th Avenues North between 26th and 33rd Streets and along Norwood Boulevard, which extends from 19th Avenue to Vanderbilt Road

COLLEGEVILLE SITES

Residential District

To east and west of Huntsville Road between 27th and 35th Avenues North

Site of Lauderdale College
Also known as North Birmingham Elementary School
Corner 27th Court and 34th Place North

Collegeville Housing Project (1964)
3031 29th Avenue

Bethel Baptist Church
3233 29th Avenue North

Carver (originally Hudson) High School
33rd Terrace North

To reach North Birmingham, take 26th Street north from Birmingham's central business district (just across the viaduct veer right on 29th Avenue North to North Birmingham commercial district along 27th Street or continue east to Collegeville.

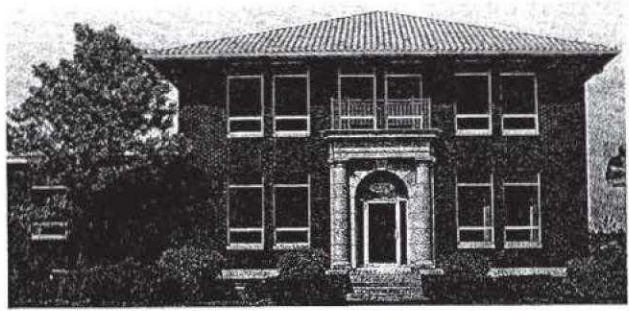
rant

rior to the Civil War, the Meriwether n embraced most of what is now rant. Six springs flowed nearby. In 8, pioneer settlers founded the Bethel w Tarrant) Methodist Church. The urch maintained active campgrounds i held frequent revivals until truction of the campgrounds by federal ps in 1865.

irca 1889, George Washington mason built a farmhouse (later reused the American Legion headquarters) l established the first general store. The il community was still "just a country ce in the road" in 1889, when the L. & N. ended the Birmingham Mineral road through Boyles to Oneonta and ampton. However, this excellent rail ess opened the area for later industrial elopment.

ly the 1910s, the future site of Tarrant d developed into a rich dairy region with local dairies in operation. Also three omite quarries had been opened: TCI's ona Quarry, the Dolcito Quarry,¹ rated by Birmingham Realty ipany, successor to the Elyton Land mpny and the Lacey-Buek (also called ncer) Quarry.

n 1912, the National Cast Iron Pipe mpny built the first major industrial nt in the area. Principals in the mpny also formed the Tarrant Land mpny and laid out a grid of streets. The n of Tarrant was formed and named for



National Cast Iron Pipe Company (now Clow) Headquarters (1912). (Debora R. Gordon)

Felix I. Tarrant, president of National Cast Iron Pipe. Many streets commemorated the company's founders: A. H. Ford, F. M. Jackson, Edwin E. Linthicum, Charles Green and Charles Day. Streetcar service from Birmingham through North Birmingham and Boyles reached the community in 1916. In 1918, the Koppers Company, a Pittsburgh engineering firm, constructed a coke by-products plant for the federal government as part of the World War I effort. These industries attracted workers, who incorporated the City of Tarrant on August 17, 1918. The population was 734. G. W. Thomason

served as the city's first mayor and justice of the peace. Alabama By-Products Corporation (ABC), formed in December of 1920 to mine coal and produce coke, acquired the Koppers plant and increased its capacity several times, with proportionate increases in primary

¹The Elyton Land Company acquired the Dolcito Quarry site in the 1880s when attempting to gain right-of-way for the Five Mile Creek Canal which would bring water from Five Mile Creek to the North Birmingham pumping station. An obstinate land owner refused to sell anything but his entire 480-acre tract. Active quarrying began there in the early 1900s.

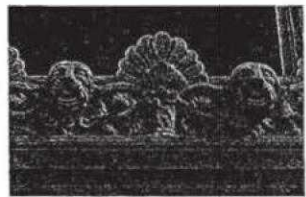
by-products: ammonia, benzol and coal tar.²

The 1920s were years of steady growth with many new industries attracted to Tarrant. In 1919, Herbert Smith established the Vulcan Rivet Company, a bolt and rivet manufacturing plant.³ In the early 1920s, Lehigh Portland and Lone Star Cement companies built large plants just to the west of Tarrant. The L. & N. maintained and expanded its shops and yards. In 1926, Bert Meadows located the Birmingham Ornamental Iron Company, then makers of wrought iron railings, stairs, grates and grillwork, just north of Tarrant. The Tarrant Commercial Club, forerunner of the present Chamber of Commerce, was formed in 1924. Population by 1930 had grown to 7,341.

In 1937, the City of Birmingham, with the aid of the Works Progress Administration and the Public Works Administration, constructed an industrial water line through the Pinson Valley to a dam which created Inland Lake, 31 miles north of Birmingham. During the past 30 years, this water supply coupled with improved roads, good rail access and active promotion have led many new industries to locate in industrial parks constructed in the Tarrant-Pinson area. Promoters of the area's industrial growth have been the Birmingham Realty Company, the L. & N. and Seaboard railroads and Birmingham businessman H. Y. Carson, all large landholders along the old L. & N. Mineral Railroad and the Pinson Valley Parkway



The First National Bank of Birmingham—Tarrant Branch, formerly Tarrant City Savings Bank (1920s). (Courtesy, The First National Bank of Birmingham)



Grotesque heads and classical arched entrance to the Tarrant bank. (Debora R. Gordon)



Fieldstone bungalow, Sloan Avenue. (Marjorie L. White)

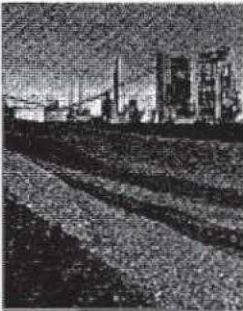
(Alabama Highway 79 and the route of the old Huntsville Road.) Carson served as the guiding light for Pinson Valley redevelopment. In 1964, he donated 100 acres of land for establishment of Jefferson State Junior College, now located on H. Y. Carson Road, several miles north of Tarrant. The Birmingham Waterworks Company filter plant, built and put into service in 1972, was also named for Carson.

Among major firms attracted to the Pinson Valley in recent years are the Birmingham Ornamental Iron Company, a

²A slogan which also used the first letters in the company's name boasted company coke as "Alabama's Best Coke" and soon to be "America's Best Coke."

³A division of Bethlehem Steel since 1952, the plant still operates in Tarrant.

gham company founded in Tarrant specializing in production of st-iron furniture; Thompson Tractor iny, also a Birmingham firm shed in 1957; the St. Regis Paper ny of New York; Hoerner-Waldorf ation of St. Paul, Minnesota; the Steel Productions Corporation of ook, Illinois; the Royal Cup Coffee y, a Birmingham firm established 3 and now operated by William E. and family; and other cturers, distributors and tors of industrial and agricultural ts.



Plant Coke Plant, 1880 (Courtesy, ABC)

ABC's Tarrant coke plant is one of the largest independent merchant coke plants in the United States, making ABC one of the nation's largest independent manufacturers of merchant coke. ABC's Chetopa mine near Graysville and other mines in northern Jefferson County supply metallurgical coal to the Tarrant plant. James B. Clow & Sons, a Chicago-based pipe company with foundries in Ohio and Illinois, acquired Tarrant's original industry, the National Cast Iron Pipe Company plant, in 1928. In 1935, National Cast Iron Pipe was merged into the Clow company. Later known as Clow Corporation, the company is now principally devoted to waste and water treatment. The Tarrant plant produced cast iron pipe and fittings until October of 1980 when pipe casting operations were discontinued. Today, the plant, whose initial construction led to the founding of the City of Tarrant, operates a sand castings foundry that produces pipe fittings and engineered castings for general industry and employs about 100 persons.

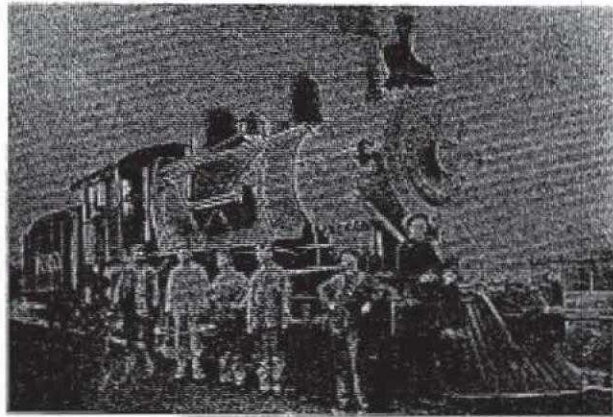
TARRANT SITES

- Clow Corporation Tarrant City Plant, est. 1912**
Headquarters (1912)
(Now a sand casting foundry)
Pinson Valley Highway (AL 79) at National Street
- Alabama By-Products Corporation Coke By-Products Plant, est. 1918**
Pinson Valley Highway

- TCI Katona Quarry (1900-1923)**
Now Katona Lakes
Just west of Pinson Valley Highway
- Dolcito Quarry, est. January 12, 1910**
2101 Pinson Valley Highway
- Vulcan Rivet and Bolt Company, est. 1918**
(Division of Bethlehem Steel Corporation since 1952)
1620 Pinson Valley Highway
- Birmingham Ornamental Iron Company, est. 1928**
Present plant built in 1966
1357 Pinson Valley Highway
- Site of Mortweather Farmhouse**
(This antebellum farm embraced the site of the city of Tarrant.)
Now Western Supermarket
1620 Pinson Street
- Commercial District (1910s-40s)**
Pinson Street between AL 79 and JC 126
- Ellis Bynum's Drug Store, est. 1913**
(Tarrant's first drugstore and post office)
SE corner of Ford Avenue and Pinson Street
- Tarrant City Hall & Fire Station (1920)**
1004 Ford Avenue
- Tarrant United (formerly Bethel) Methodist Church, est. 1818 (1957)**
Jackson Boulevard at Ford Avenue
- Tarrant City Savings Bank**
1707 Pinson Street
- Tarrant Library, est. 1930 (1937)**
Since 1952 the recreation center at park
- Tarrant Library (1952)**
Site of C. M. Green House
1143 Ford Street
- The First National Bank of Birmingham, Tarrant Branch (1920s)**
Originally Tarrant City Savings Bank (later American Traction National Bank) 315 Pinson Street

- Bynum House (1914)**
1805 Pinson Street
- Original Residential District (1910s-20s)**
Jackson Boulevard to Etowah, Thomson, Sloan, Wharton, Ford and Elizabeth Streets
- Tarrant City Public School (1923)**
East Lake Boulevard

To reach Tarrant from I 59-20, take AL 79 northeast at Exit 128 (Tallapoosa Street).



L & N locomotive, coal car and crew (fire, brake and flagman) at Boyles Shop, c. 1905. (Birmingham Public Library)

Boyles

In 1927, Tarrant annexed the City of Boyles, which had incorporated in 1920. Boyles Junction, at the intersection of the L & N main line and the mineral railroad, existed as early as 1887. Here from 1904 to 1911 the railroad built a \$34 million shop center including roundhouse and such

advanced features as classification by gravity and car retarders. A residential community developed about the yards. In 1906, streetcar service was extended to Boyles through East and North Birmingham and the community grew. The Birmingham Waterworks canal, built in the 1880s from Five Mile Creek to North Birmingham, formed the spine of the town, today's Canal Avenue and Jefferson Boulevard. Boyles was named for Irish engineer Bartholemew Boyles, who was active in construction of the South and North Alabama Railroad across the state. In the 1870s, he acquired substantial acreage, including mineral lands about Lewisburg and New Castle.

BOYLES SITES

- L & N Yards, est. 1904**
To west of Pinson Valley Highway
- Boyles United Methodist Church, est. 1907 (1908)**
Now a private residence—837 Bell Avenue
- Boyles Baptist Church, est. 1907**
1408 Alabama Street
- Boyles Public School (1926)**
939 Overton Avenue

To reach Boyles from I 59-20, take AL 79 north at Exit 128 (Tallapoosa Street).

Inglennook

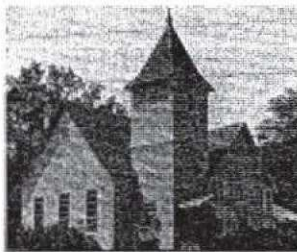
Development of the Boyles yards created a demand for housing. In 1910, the



ayles and Inglenook in 1914 with L. & N. yards and hops an integral part of the communities. Grefenamp's Map of Birmingham, 1914, Ageo Map collection)

nglenook Realty Company, of which R. M. fenderson was president and lawyer 3. W. Yancey secretary-treasurer, ogether with the Inglenook Land ompany, in which Yancey served with irmingham businessman and developer ichard W. Massey, began subdivision of nglenook, a residential community on an olatated and quiet hillside above the umber of the railroad yards. According to a long-time community resident, employment opportunities at the L. & N.

yards "pulled the crowd out there." Residential construction began in 1911 and continued through the 1910s and 1920s. W. P. Blair, general manager of the Inglenook Construction Company, built many of the attractive bungalow residences and several of the churches which border Inglenook's narrow tree-lined streets. Many of the area churches, including the Inglenook First United Methodist and First Baptist Churches, were established at this time. Corporate limits of the community were first defined in 1917. In the early 1920s, S. P. Helton served as mayor. On May 17, 1927, Inglenook became the first incorporated town to voluntarily annex itself to the City of Birmingham. Construction of the Spanish style fire



Enon Cumberland Presbyterian Church (Debora R. Gordon)

station in the late 1920s, a branch of the Birmingham Public Library since 1979, was one of Birmingham's first public improvements in its newest suburb. In 1934 an estimated 3,201 persons (including 801 families) comprised the population of Inglenook's 1.7 square miles. Additional houses were constructed in the post World War II boom. Still geographically isolated, Inglenook retains a strong sense of community identity.

INGLENOOK SITES

Older Residential District (1910s-20s)
North of East Lake Boulevard
34th to 40th Avenues North
Vanderbilt Road east to 41st Street

Inglenook Cumberland (Later United) Presbyterian Church, est. 1921 (1898)
Now Heritage Primitive Baptist Church
East Lake Boulevard at 41st Street North

Inglenook First United Methodist Church, est. 1913 (1924, 1949)
4108 39th Avenue North

First Baptist Church of Inglenook, est. 1914 (1926)
41st Street and 40th Terrace North

Birmingham Public Library Inglenook Branch (1927)
City Fire Station from 1927 to 1975
41st Street and 40th Terrace North

Inglenook Cemetery
Between 41st and 43rd Avenues North east of 40th Place

To reach Inglenook, take AL 79 north from I 59-20 Tallapoosa Street exit. Community is on right of highway.

THE CAHABA VALLEY

The Cahaba River rises in the highland springs near Springville, Alabama, 27 miles northeast of Birmingham, and flows in a southwesterly direction through the present-day communities of Ayres, Clay and Trussville through Grant's Mill and Overton to its junction with the Little Cahaba, eight miles south of the City of Birmingham. The Little Cahaba, rising in springs located to the northeast of Leeds, flows in a southwesterly direction through the Cahaba Valley to Lake Purdy. Oak Mountain forms the southeastern border of this valley.

Indians named the Cahaba Rivers "Ika Uba," meaning "waters above," i.e., above their principal settlements farther south along the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers. Early 19th-century accounts describe the rivers as beautiful streams, clear as crystal, in which one could see a fish in ten feet of water.

White settlers first entered the fertile lands bordering the Cahaba Rivers during the Creek Indian Wars in 1813 and 1814. Many returned to settle and establish farms, in some cases side by side with Indians who remained and farmed in the area surrounding Trussville. Early white settlers entered the eastern portion of Jefferson County over the Ashville-Montevallo Road (today portions of the Springville and Ashville Roads — Highways 30 and 119) or a branch of the Huntsville Road (now Highway 10) which

turned south from the main branch at Pinson, joining the Ashville-Montevallo Road at Chalkville. In general, this portion of Jefferson County was occupied by small farmers (274 in 1860) who never acquired much land except in the fertile valleys surrounding Trussville and Leeds. They and their families did however constitute

about one-quarter of the population of the county in 1860.

Several of the county's earliest churches were founded in this section, including Taylor's Chapel (now United) Methodist, established 1818; Mount Hobron Baptist, established 1819; Cahawba Baptist (now First Baptist of Trussville), established



Cedar Mount Baptist Church (above) and Peaceful Valley Baptist Church (below). (Marjorie L. White)



Taylor's Chapel Methodist Cemetery, established in the early 1800s, is one of Jefferson County's more than 200 cemeteries. (Marjorie L. White)

1820; Shiloh Cumberland (now Leeds) Presbyterian, established 1822; Mount Calvary (originally a Cumberland) Presbyterian Church, established c. 1816; and the Shiloh Methodist Church, established 1826.

With the exception of industrial communities at Leeds and Trussville and mining communities at Henry Ellen, Margaret, Acmar and Overton and the Birmingham Waterworks Cahaba Pumping Station, this section of Jefferson